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AUTHOR Ediger, Marlow
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ABSTRACT

To evaluate pupil achievement in the area of elementary school social studies, selected evaluation techniques are discussed and practical suggestions for implementation are offered. The discussed techniques include: (1) work samples, (2) rating scales, (3) checklists, (4) teacher observation, (5) sociometric devices, (6) anecdotal records, (7) written summaries, (8) dramatic activities, (9) standardized achievement tests, (10) standardized personality tests, (11) conferences with pupils, (12) conferences with parents, (13) using teacher made tests, (14) writing true-false items, (15) writing essay items, (16) writing multiple choice items, (17) writing completion tests, and (18) writing matching items. A section (containing six items) listed as Problems for Consideration and Discussion is included. (PN)

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EVALUATING PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT

Numerous techniques should be utilized by the teacher to evaluate pupil achievement in the area of elementary school social studies. No one technique is perfect. When using a variety of techniques to evaluate pupil achievement, comparisons may be made among the results in making social studies curriculum decisions for each pupil. One evaluation technique can be used as a check against results from other evaluation techniques. Then, too, evaluation techniques may differ from each other in use as to what is being evaluated. Selected evaluative techniques may center more on evaluation of pupil achievement in the area of understandings as compared to skills and attitudes, while a different evaluation technique may attempt to determine pupil achievement in the area of attitudes or skills.

Work Samples of Pupils

The social studies teacher should at regular intervals save completed work products of pupils. The date may be recorded on each finished product. Comparisons can be made of present achievement of a pupil as contrasted with earlier achievement levels to notice progress made. Pupils individually also should be involved in comparing their own present achievement with earlier attempts. This could spur a pupil on toward greater efforts when competing against himself or herself over previous efforts and work.

A pupil who has developed a written report using a variety of sources for obtaining information may place the final product in a personal folder.

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The date should be listed on the written report. Later written reports may also be dated and placed in the same folder. Comparisons can then be made to notice achievement between earlier and later attempts at writing reports.

Tape recordings can be made of individual pupils presenting their findings on completed research to the class. These recordings may be dated and stored to make comparisons of a pupil's present achievement level with that of earlier attempts.

It is more difficult to make comparison of present with earlier attempts in items that have been constructed due to a lack of storage space. There may be space in some elementary schools to store a few items in making comparisons from one period of time to another concerning pupil achievement in constructing objects. Pupils, for example, could make toys that are representative of what children play with in a particular foreign country or countries. The construction activity would relate directly to the unit being studied. Since these toys generally are small in size, storage may not present a major problem in some elementary schools. This may give pupils an opportunity to make comparisons of their work individually now as compared to past times when engaging in constructing items and objects.

Using Rating Scales

Rating scales may be used by the teacher as well as pupils to evaluate learner achievement in the social studies. A five point scale can be used or categories such as "very good," "good," "average," "below average," and "poor" may be used. The behaviors of pupils which will be rated need to be selected carefully. In a group discussion for pupils, the following criteria, for example, may be listed for rating purposes:

	Very Good	Good	Average	Below Average	Poor
The pupil stays on the topic being discussed					
Respect for the thinking of others is in evidence					
Important questions are asked by the participant					
The pupil presents ideas clearly					

The name of the pupil and date for each rating obtained should be written on the rating scale. Comparisons should be made of each pupil's achievement over past times. The teacher, of course, should realize that this is not a perfect device to evaluate pupil achievement in social studies. The teacher's feelings and perception will vary when the rating scale is used from one time to the next. If the teacher is aware of these variables, a more objective perception may exist on the part of the teacher when rating scales are used. The rating scale should be used at different intervals when conditions are as comparable as possible. For example, it may make for great differences in perception and feelings of the teacher, generally, if the rating scale was used in evaluating a given pupil Tuesday morning for the first evaluation and late Friday afternoon several weeks later for the second evaluation using a given set of criteria. It would be better practice to utilize the rating scale under comparable conditions for a specific pupil. In the above example the rating scale for the areas being evaluated should be used either on Tuesday mornings or Friday afternoons. The rating scale must be used along with other devices to evaluate pupil achievement.

Using Checklists

In many ways, a checklist is similar to a rating scale utilized to assess pupil progress. A carefully prepared checklist may assist social studies teachers to diagnose pupil weaknesses. The resulting information can then help the teacher to provide for each child in a class setting. The checklist may pertain to assessing pupils' strengths and weaknesses in understandings, skills, and attitudes. Criteria to be evaluated need to be carefully selected by the teacher.

Name of pupil . . . . . Date . . . . . .

Check Where Pupil Needs More Help

1. The pupil needs more help in organizing ideas after gathering information from a variety of sources.
2. More guidance is needed in helping pupils locate information.
3. More help is needed in guiding pupils in the mechanics of writing.
4. The pupil needs more assistance in writing ideas clearly.

The above categories are given as examples; the teacher needs to select categories pertaining to what is important in a given learning activity. If it is helpful to the teacher, standards which pupils are to realize may be written which are very specific. Goals that pupils are to realize should be attainable in order that all learners may experience success.

It is easy for the social studies teacher to forget which areas of learning individual pupils need more help in, unless adequate records are kept.

Teacher Observation

The most common technique used to evaluate pupil achievement in the social studies is teacher observation. The teacher should continually observe pupils in order to use this information to provide for individual differences. The teacher may observe which pupils complete assignments on time. If a pupil does not complete an assignment on time, the teacher needs to determine, among other factors, if the assigned work was excessively difficult or lacked purpose for the learner. The teacher can observe which learning activities capture the interests of pupils. If pupils are not actively involved in a given learning activity, the teacher needs to evaluate whether the activity should be changed so that optimal learning may result. The teacher may observe that a particular child has become inattentive recently. Through further data that is obtained about the child, it may be found that a parent or other member of the family is very ill thus distracting the child from his or her ability to learn. Also, a child who is continually becoming less attentive in school may have personal or social problems which prevent achieving optimal development. These problems may be due to financial difficulties in the home, poor human relations in the home, a lack of friends in school, or a lack of satisfactory teacher-pupil relationships. The teacher should assess the objectives, learning activities, and evaluation techniques to determine if they are guiding learners to achieve well. The objectives may be too difficult for selected pupils to realize. The learning activities may not capture pupils' interests due to being excessively difficult or easy. The learner then cannot attach meaning to what is being learned or develop new learnings. Too frequently, teachers have been punitive pertaining to test results obtained from pupils. Pupils

have been scolded or reprimanded for not doing better on a test. The teacher rather should help learners gain what was not achieved previously. School should be a stimulating and pleasant place for pupils to be so that desirable attitudes are developed toward learning.

Using Sociometric Devices

An evaluation technique which may give the social studies teacher valuable data on social development of pupils, if used properly, is the sociometric device. In an atmosphere of respect, trust, and confidence, the social studies teacher can ask pupils for written responses to questions such as the following:

1. If you had a chance to make a relief map (or other kind of learning activity) with three other pupils, who would be your first choice? Second choice? Third choice?
2. If you had the opportunity to choose three pupils you would want to play games with (these could be games that children play relating to another culture in a unit), who would be your first choice? Second choice? Third choice?

In evaluating responses given by pupils, the teacher can notice which pupils are freely chosen by others for participating in different kinds of learning activities in the social studies program. The teacher may also notice which pupils are chosen a few times as well as those pupils chosen rarely or not at all. It is important for the teacher to guide pupils in developing proper social relationships. An elementary school is a social situation since interaction among many individuals occurs. Pupils interact with each other in social situations as well as with the teacher, principal, and other school personnel. It must be an unhappy situation for a pupil to

be rejected by his classmates! Negative reactions by pupils to a particular child will affect the latter in his total development intellectually, socially, and emotionally. Thus the teacher of social studies should assist the child who is an isolate, as well as pupils who are close to being isolates, to develop proper social relationships. Social studies, in particular, should assist pupils to develop good human relationships since this curriculum area deals, among other things, with human beings' relationships to other humans. Pupils study people in the social studies.

Getting data from pupils as to who their personal choices are in learning activities which are pursued is not adequate; the teacher must utilize this information to form committees which can work together well. A child who is an isolate, no doubt, can best work in a committee where the other members are very accepting and understanding. Secondly, it gives the teacher a chance to compare observations of social relationships among pupils with that of responses given by pupils in writing. The data pupils give should be kept strictly confidential by the teacher. The results, of course, should be utilized to improve the social studies curriculum. Thirdly, the sociometric device should be utilized several times a year since pupils' attitudes and feelings toward others change. It may change rapidly if two pupils who have been good friends consistently had a major disagreement prior to the time the sociometric device is utilized. It may be that this disagreement is greatly minimized or almost forgotten a few hours later. At other intervals friendships may and do change permanently. It is important for the teacher to observe peer relationships carefully and compare observations with that obtained from the use of the sociometric device. Pupils' choice of friends when using the sociometric device, in some instances, may differ much from what the teacher observes in the many situations that pupils participate in,

on the playground as well as in the class setting.

Using Anecdotal Records

Observations of pupils' behavior may be forgotten unless recorded by the teacher. The recording of each pupil's general behavior should be done at frequent intervals so that a pattern may become apparent to the teacher. It is important for the teacher to record representative behavior of each child. Focusing upon negative behavior only, should be avoided since this will not be representative behavior exhibited by each pupil.

The social studies teacher should write down exactly what the child did in specific situations rather than use vague, ambiguous words. It is quite apparent that words such as "lazy," "indifferent," and "troublesome" would not specifically describe a pupil's actions or deeds. These words would leave much room for interpretation by readers of anecdotal statements. Statements should be clearly written and objective. The teacher should not allow feelings to dictate what is written about each child. The following statements, for example, may clearly indicate an observed act of a student: Jimmy followed the line and took his turn in getting a drink of water from the water fountain; Carl answered orally five out of six questions correctly over content read from his social studies textbook; and Sue handed in her written report one day late in a social studies report she had volunteered to develop.

Future teachers looking over anecdotal records, if available in cumulative folders written by the child's previous teacher, should realize that pupils may behave differently with a change of teachers.

Using Written Summaries

Individual pupils or a committee of pupils could write up the major generalizations or conclusions realized from a daily lesson in elementary school social studies. Summaries could also be written for longer periods of time and from the entire unit. It would be important to give all pupils in a class opportunities to participate in developing these summaries; otherwise, the learning activities could become routine and dull with the same pupils writing up the summaries on a daily, weekly, or entire unit basis. Learning activities should be varied to maintain or develop pupil interest and purpose in ongoing social studies units. Also, in a democratic classroom all pupils should be active participants in a variety of worthwhile learning activities; each pupil should realize his highest potential.

Illustrations could be completed which would relate to the written summaries. Pupils engaged in developing these illustrations, no doubt, will develop many new learnings as a result of this learning activity since questions about the pictures will arise in the minds of learners and related information will need to be located. Much thought and planning should go into determining which pictures would clearly relate to the completed written summary.

These summaries can be stored for future reference. Pupils should have chances to review previous learnings by rereading the summaries. Time needs to be spent by pupils with teacher assistance in evaluating the accuracy and importance of summary statements. Knowledge that had been developed previously can be utilized in a new situation when pupils become actively involved in developing illustrations and writing summary statements. The teacher can evaluate the quality of his teaching when

reading the summaries by noticing which objectives learners realized from the completed learning activity or activities.

Pupils studying a unit on the local community may develop, among others, the following conclusions in their own words which could then be recorded as summary statements:

1. Workers in a community produce goods and services.
2. Individuals in a community are highly interdependent for necessities and luxuries of life.
3. The beliefs, values, and customs of individuals differ within a community and yet there is enough agreement on standards or criteria to make for cohesiveness.
4. Local, state, and national governments provide rules and regulations for people to live by.
5. Geographical features such as mountains, hills, plains, valleys, lakes, and plateaus vary from area to area.
6. The history of a community relates to its present status in that there are causes for present day conditions.

Using Dramatic Activities

A social studies teacher can gather much information about pupil achievement when pupils are participating in dramatic activities. Pupils must develop many accurate concepts, facts, and generalizations to present a good dramatization. The teacher can readily notice which pupils reveal incorrect understandings through their performance. Guidance then needs to be given to these pupils to develop accurate understandings. This would mean that the teacher should select those learning activities which would guide learners to change previously held understandings which were

erroneous. Following this, pupils could then engage in the same or similar dramatic activity; the teacher thus would be able to assess the effectiveness of the new learning activities. Feedback must be utilized by the teacher to evaluate the effectiveness of his teaching.

Educators are realizing more and more that teachers hold major responsibility in helping learners to achieve. The teacher who complains that a child is lazy or indifferent may not have accepted the latter in terms of his present achievement. Also, the teacher needs to plan learning activities which are interesting, challenging, purposeful, and relevant so that important objectives can be realized.

Using Standardized Achievement Tests

In many elementary schools in the United States standardized tests are generally administered once a year. Standardized tests used in evaluating pupil achievement should rate high in reliability and validity. The results of each pupil's achievement on a standardized test should be thoroughly assessed. Too frequently, teachers have erroneously assumed that each child should achieve up to grade level when studying his results from standardized achievement tests. This would violate rules that pertain to allowing for differences among individuals within a classroom. Some pupils can learn more rapidly than others and at the same time retain learnings longer. Some pupils are not as interested in social studies as they could be; thus, achievement in that curriculum area will not be as great as would otherwise be the case. Pupils come from different environments in a given community. Their homes may have many excellent library books that directly relate to social studies units being taught now or in the future. Maybe the home also contains a set of reputable, recent encyclopedias from which many important

understandings, skills, and attitudes can be developed which would transfer positively to various social studies units in the elementary school. This same home may have many excellent records on music from different nations of the world thus aiding children to understand and appreciate how music differs and is alike from various countries in the world. Other factors could also be mentioned on the home providing a good environment related to the social studies for children such as the following:

1. Parents understanding and loving their young dependents.
2. Excursions being taken to places of importance.
3. Discussions and conversations in areas related to the social studies being a part of everyday living.
4. Parents reading good library books with attractive illustrations to the young child who presently lacks an adequate reading vocabulary of his own.
5. Parents taking a wholesome interest in the child's achievement in the social studies.

Competent teachers are of utmost importance in teaching the social studies. Also important is a good learning environment in the home which will complement the social studies program in the elementary school. Thus, learners in a class will achieve at different levels in a standardized social studies test due not only to such factors as capacity and interest but also to the richness of the home environment. Other factors involved in helping pupils to do well in standardized social studies tests would include physical and mental health, purpose in learning, energy level, and attitudes toward the taking of tests.

It is quite evident that the teacher needs to guide each learner to reach his highest development in the social studies as well as in other

curriculum areas. Pupils would thus vary much in achievement test results within a class. If the class is grouped heterogeneously, the range of achievement will be greater as compared to homogeneous grouping. Results from standardized achievement tests for each pupil should be carefully evaluated; other techniques should also be utilized to assess pupil achievement.

Using Standardized Personality Tests

Standardized personality tests administered by the teacher will not have the validity and reliability as contrasted to reputable standardized achievement tests. The feelings and attitudes, for example, of pupils may vary more from one situation to another as compared to understandings that have been developed. Two pupils may be close friends until they have a major disagreement; it may be a short time later that the friendship is renewed. The feelings these pupils had toward each other changed from positive to negative and back to positive feelings. A pupil may like social studies until he experiences frustration in one or more learning activities. He may develop positive attitudes again if success and accomplishment are experienced. Teachers must be aware of attitudes and feelings changing on the part of pupils when evaluating results from standardized personality tests which must have high validity and reliability.

Teachers who are very knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of personality tests can utilize the results of each pupil to do a better job of teaching. Data could be obtained from learners on their attitudes toward the teacher or teachers, classmates, parents, and the home situation by using selected standardized tests. Again, it must be remembered that

the results from these tests should be used along with other techniques to evaluate pupil achievement. This is necessary so that thoroughness is involved in evaluating pupil achievement.

Having Conferences with Pupils

The teacher should get to know each pupil well in order that the best in learning activities can be provided for him. Having conferences with individual pupils can be an excellent way of learning more about each individual. To have a successful conference, good rapport should exist between the teacher and the learners. Mistrust between individuals must be minimized by practicing good human relations so that a relaxed environment is in evidence. A relaxed environment free from unnecessary tension is also necessary in everyday teaching-learning situations so that learners concentrate on learning rather than fearing the teacher.

Teachers should understand pupils thoroughly and accept all learners as human beings having worth. Some teachers do not accept children from minority groups as human beings who deserve the best in teaching. These same teachers may perceive their role as being one of passing or flunking children rather than teaching all pupils. There certainly is a difference between a teacher who perceives his role to be one of determining who is to be passed and who is to be failed as compared to a teacher who provides for individual differences so that all learners can be successful. Poor environmental conditions, low morale, and a negative self-concept certainly hinder a child from attaining his highest development. Opposite conditions would, of course, help pupils to develop well. Thus the teacher needs to have much knowledge about each child and use this information to do a better job of

teaching.

Teachers have scolded pupils for not achieving as well as formerly. They may have been very unsympathetic to these children until reliable information has been obtained as to factors such as a member of the family being very ill in the home, or parents not getting along favorably. This changes the perception of the teacher to becoming sympathetic and understanding of these pupils. Determining the causes of behavior has helped teachers to provide for individual learners. Too frequently, teachers have looked at "effects" only, in assessing pupil behavior. Misunderstandings and poor pupil-teacher relationships have then resulted.

These statements have indicated the necessity of getting much information about each pupil. The conference method can be one approach in getting needed confidential information. Criteria in conducting conferences could be the following:

1. Develop and maintain good rapport with each pupil.
2. Permit the pupil positive freedom to exhibit his feelings toward social studies and other curriculum areas in the elementary school as well as toward teachers, classmates, friends, and family members.
3. Conferences with each pupil should be held frequently since attitudes and feelings of pupils change.
4. Don't criticize a pupil for expressing negative ideas; he may not express his thinking openly if his responses are criticized.
5. Show interest in each pupil and reveal your honest desire to work for his welfare.
6. Don't ask questions which pupils do not wish to answer.
7. Develop a relaxed environment free from threats against each pupil.

The teacher can record what has been discussed in the conference after it has ended. Comparisons can be made from one conference to the next to notice if changes in each pupil's behavior have resulted. Comparisons should be made only in terms of a child's present level of achievement with that of earlier times. Unfair evaluation results when learners in a classroom are compared with others in different facets of development.

Having Conferences with Parents

Parent-teacher conferences can be one of the best ways of reporting pupil progress to parents. Parents have a chance in the conference to ask questions of their child's progress in a face to face situation with the teacher. Grades on report cards can give inaccurate ideas to parents with no opportunities for asking of questions to clarify thinking. Scheduled conferences can be arranged with each pupil's parents toward the beginning as well as the end of a school year. With two conferences in a given school year, comparisons can be made of growth in a child's behavior from the first to the second conference.

Children, of course, spend much time with their parents, and the home should definitely be involved in helping to provide a quality learning environment for pupils. Too often, the home and the school have not worked together to improve the total environment of the child. Parents need to be informed by the school in an atmosphere of respect pertaining to ways they can help in providing a good educational environment for their children. The school in many cases has shirked its responsibilities in getting to know parents well and in working cooperatively with them in helping each child realize his highest potential development. As has been stated previously, the school needs to have much information about each child and his home

situation in order to improve the curriculum. The school must work cooperatively with all parents so that a good learning environment exists within as well as outside the school. Pupils have lived a "long time" before they enter the public schools; therefore, much valuable background knowledge can be developed by pupils in the preschool years.

Conferences with parents can also be held which are not scheduled. The teacher can telephone parents to compliment their child who is achieving well. Teachers can get to know parents well at such functions as a Parent-Teacher Association meeting and at "open house" during American Education Week. The teacher should be available for conferences requested by parents. The purpose of these conferences would be to help the child develop to his highest level.

There are certain standards that a teacher should follow when conducting scheduled conferences.

1. The teacher should be adequately prepared prior to having the conference by having needed information available about each pupil such as standardized test results, grades received, health record, days in attendance at school, and daily achievement in school. This information, of course, needs to be evaluated by the teacher when thinking of how it would relate in a conference situation to help a child achieve to his optimum.
2. Samples of work products of pupils can be discussed with parents. Parents need to think of a child improving over his past performance and not be unfairly comparing him with other pupils.
3. The teacher should listen carefully to the thinking of parents during the conference. Parents may reveal their feelings about the child. These feelings could be positive or negative. If

parents express negative attitudes toward their child, the teacher is receiving valuable information pertaining to that child's emotional, social, intellectual, and, perhaps, even physical development. A child who is not wanted in the home will not realize his optimum potential. In fact, he could be doing very poorly in intellectual development even though there is high capacity. The same would be true of other facets of the child's development. Parents may have expectations which are excessively high for a child. The child cannot achieve to these expectations regardless of effort put forth. The aspirations of parents for their child could be excessively low. The child could achieve at a much higher rate, but he may feel inadequate due to minimizing statements made by parents, brothers and sisters, as well as friends in his own environment. By having parents express their feelings freely in a relaxed environment, the teacher can get valuable information which can be used to improve the curriculum for individual pupils. For pupils who have a low self-concept, the teacher needs to provide learning activities in which they can feel successful and receive praise. With patience and understanding, these pupils can work at a higher rate of achievement when confidence has been built up. The home certainly should share in this important task!

4. The teacher should definitely not criticize comments made by parents in a conference. Criticizing parents for remarks made will place them in a defensive position. Information usually is then withheld by parents or accusations may be made in an irrational manner. If the environment is filled with tension and anxiety, accomplishments

in a conference will generally be very limited.

Cooperatively developed decisions arrived at by the teacher and parents should work for the benefit of the child. Unfortunately, in some situations parents have used the results of the conference as a "club" on the pupil. The pupil then has developed additional negative attitudes toward the total school situation. A positive attitude on the part of the teacher toward parents and the child is important in conducting a parent-teacher conference. It is important for the teacher to accept parents as important individuals when evaluating the total learning environment of the child.

Using Teacher-Made Tests

Teacher-made tests can serve a very useful purpose in determining what pupils have not gained in realizing stated objectives in the social studies. The teacher can then provide additional learning activities based upon what pupils missed in the test.

Careful attention needs to be given to validity when teachers write the test. Important learnings pupils could have gained over a specific period of time should be measured by the test. A test constructed by a teacher would not be considered valid, for example, if the items were unrelated to what pupils had had opportunities to learn in a unit or a part of a unit.

A test developed by the teacher should also adhere to standards of reliability. Thus a pupil should be able to obtain a similar score on the same test if it were taken more than once at closely spaced intervals. Certainly, a standardized test would be criticized much if pupils ranked

on the 6.2 grade level for the total test on the first attempt and 3.7 grade level on the total test for the second time the same test was taken. Let us assume in this situation that environmental conditions were similar when pupils took the tests. Let us assume also that variations in physical and mental health on the part of pupils did not exist when taking the same test two different times with no opportunities to gain additional learnings during the one-day interval. What grade equivalent then are these pupils achieving on? The test would have low reliability since consistency in results would be lacking. Comparable results need to be obtained from individuals when taking the same test unless situations such as illness, distractions in the environment, or other unusual circumstances set in. The teacher needs to think about reliability when developing and using teacher-made tests.

The teacher needs to consider other factors also when constructing a teacher-made test.

1. Can pupils read the test items with meaning and understanding?
2. If essay tests are given, do pupils have an adequately developed writing vocabulary?
3. Are the items written clearly so that vagueness and ambiguity have been omitted?
4. Do these items measure learnings that pupils have obtained as a result of the teacher's teaching? (The teacher may feel highly successful from viewing test results of pupils; however, other factors may have entered in such as pupils having obtained these learnings prior to the present teacher's efforts in teaching or the test may have been excessively easy.)

5. Is the test excessively long for pupils to complete whereby fatigue sets in? Or, is the test too short so that pupils can't reveal an adequate number of understandings they have developed?
6. Are the items arranged in ascending order of difficulty? (Pupils need psychological security in responding to easier items first.)
7. Are the directions clearly given for pupils to follow in taking the test?

Writing True-false Items

The teacher can obtain much information on pupil achievement toward realizing objectives by giving a true-false test. There is, of course, the possibility of guessing correctly on a test of this kind. However, a true-false test of adequate length with items being representative of what was taught should greatly minimize the problems of guessing. Subtracting the number of items missed by a pupil from the number of correct responses could also minimize the "guessing" factor.

To evaluate what pupils have learned, the teacher should not use wording taken from a textbook. Pupils could memorize statements from a textbook and not be able to use the information in a new situation when the wording has changed. Using what has been learned in a new situation is of utmost importance.

Certainly, the teacher will gain little or no knowledge of pupil achievement when the true-false items are "tricky." The teacher needs to determine which objectives pupils have realized from taking a true-false test. Using words which confuse pupils would not assist the teacher in determining what has been learned. Specific determiners should not be

used in true-false items. There generally are exceptions to many statements that are made. Thus words such as "none," "never," and "all," used in true-false items would usually indicate that the item is false. It would be rather rare that sentences containing these words would be classified as being "true."

Sometimes pupils have become confused when responding to a true-false item which contains an opinion of the teacher. These pupils may realize that the teacher "holds" to the opinion, but it may not be true when compared with facts from reliable reference sources. The teacher should assist learners to separate fact from opinion.

Answers to true-false items should not follow a pattern such as every other item being "true." Pupils could recognize the pattern and respond accordingly. It is appropriate to mix "true" responses with "false" responses with no recognizable pattern involved. The number of statements which are "true" should equal approximately the number of statements that are "false."

Writing Essay Items

Fewer items can be written on an essay test as compared to a true-false test. However, in an essay test, pupils reveal proficiency in recalling and organizing ideas which relate directly to the question being answered or the problem being solved. Clarity of ideas expressed as well as the mechanics of writing of pupils can be evaluated.

Since fewer essay questions can be written for a teacher-made test as compared to true-false items, the teacher also needs to select items for an essay test which are representative of learnings obtained by pupils during a specific time. The learnings obtained, of course, relate directly

to objectives of social studies units.

The teacher should write the possible answer or answers to each essay item before evaluating pupils' papers. This would help in removing subjectivity when scoring essay tests. If pupils give additional responses than those listed on the teacher's key, proper credit should be given to correct answers. The teacher may give more raw score points for one question as compared to others on an essay test; pupils should understand the reasons for this.

As was stated previously, the teacher can notice how proficient pupils are in the mechanics of writing when taking an essay test. The teacher wants to determine if objectives have been realized by pupils. The language arts areas of spelling, handwriting, capitalization, usage, and punctuation are important in writing; however, they should be evaluated separately from understandings, skills, and attitudes pupils have developed in social studies. In these areas of the language arts, pupils can be evaluated in terms of individual improvement over previous performance. A child, of course, will not change overnight or in a short time from a lack of skill in using the mechanics of writing to one having high proficiency in these areas.

When evaluating responses to essay examinations, the teacher should check all the responses of children for one question before moving on to checking all the responses for a second question, and so on. The teacher needs to be aware of such factors as fatigue on his part as well as subjectivity when evaluating pupils' papers. The teacher, of course, should be as objective as possible when evaluating answers of pupils to essay tests. It would be excellent if the teacher could not identify the owner of the

responses to the essay items while the written content is being evaluated.

Writing Multiple-Choice Items

When pupils take multiple-choice tests, they identify the correct response from four possibilities generally. The teacher when writing these items must have four reasonable responses with one or more being correct. Too frequently teachers have written multiple-choice items where three responses are ridiculously incorrect; thus the child needs very little knowledge to determine the correct response. Or, two of four responses have been reasonable as correct responses to a multiple-choice test item. This would actually resemble a true-false item since there are only two reasonable responses and one of these is correct. The teacher can write multiple-choice items which have three alternatives for pupils to choose from if it is difficult to list a fourth response which is plausible.

The stem of a multiple choice item together with each of the responses should make for a sentence which is grammatically correct. Consider the following as an example:

An important trend in American society is that

a) people generally are moving from rural to urban areas.

b) the amount of leisure time available for individuals has remained stable.

c) the demand for jobs involving manual labor remains stable.

d) all of the above are correct.

The stem together with any one of the responses makes for a sentence which is grammatically correct. For ease in checking multiple-choice items, pupils should write the correct responses on lines toward the right-hand

margins.

When writing multiple-choice items, the teacher should not write clues in the stems of items. The following would be an example whereby an article in the stem would indicate which is the correct response:

Australia is an

a) island.

b) continent.

c) peninsula.

d) bay.

It is quite obvious that response "a" would be correct since the article "an" requires a word which follows that has a vowel sound at the beginning.

Pupils may receive a clue as to the correct response of a multiple choice item if the responses vary considerably in length such as in the following:

The major reason for Puritans coming to the New World would be

a) economic difficulties.

b) the potato famine.

c) their being denied religious freedom in England.

d) European wars.

Generally, responses in multiple choice items should be of similar length. The correct answers to multiple choice items should not be placed in the same position nor should they follow a pattern.

Multiple-choice items should be written which assist in evaluating pupil achievement on factual knowledge as well as critical thinking and problem solving.

Writing Completion Tests

When pupils respond to completion items, they need to recall the correct answer or answers. The correct answer generally cannot be recognized from several choices as was true of multiple choice items. An exception to this would be where the teacher writes all the needed responses above the numbered completion items containing blank spaces such as in the following example:

Tel Aviv	Damascus	Alexandria
Jerusalem	Baghdad	Tehran
Amman	Cairo	Mecca

1. The capital of the United Arab Republic is . . . . . .
2. . . . . was the capital city of ancient Israel.
3. . . . . is the capital of Jordan today.
4. . . . . and . . . . . were capital cities in the ancient Arab Empire.
5. . . . . is a modern city in Israel and is located along the Mediterranean coast.
6. . . . . was the birthplace of Mohammed.

Many tests containing completion items do not have the answers listed in random order as was true of the above example.

Some important guidelines for teachers to follow when constructing tests which contain completion items would be the following:

1. Write the item clearly so pupils understand what is wanted in terms of responses. Vague, poorly written items do not assist the teacher in evaluating pupil achievement.
2. Much time can be saved in scoring completion items if the blanks

for responses are placed toward the margin on the right-hand side of the page. The spaces for blanks should be large enough so that pupils can write legibly.

3. Answers to completion items should not be checked wrong due to words being misspelled. Correct spelling can be evaluated separately from correct answers if spelling in the social studies is an important goal.
4. Completion items completed by pupils should reveal important facts, concepts, and generalizations that have been developed. Important objectives have thus been realized.
5. If pupils have responded with an answer which is correct and yet it differs from the answer or answers intended to be correct by the teacher originally, full credit should be given for the correct answer.
6. Textbook wording generally should not be utilized in writing completion items. Rote learning of answers in many cases reveals that pupils do not attach meaning to ongoing activities.

Writing Matching Items

To minimize possibilities for pupils to engage in guessing when taking a matching test, there should be more items in one column as compared to the other column as is true of the following example:

A. Abraham Lincoln	famous American General during the
B. George Washington	Revolutionary War and first
C. Benjamin Franklin	President of the United States.
D. Alexander Hamilton	first Secretary of the Treasury.

E. Andrew Jackson . . . . President of the United States

F. John Adams . . . . during the Civil War.

. . . . a statesman and inventor.

. . . . advocated the spoils system.

Pupils can write in the correct letter from the response alternatives of the first column to the blank space in front of the items of the second column. Lines can also be drawn from the first to the second column to indicate correct matchings. The teacher can write matching items whereby response alternatives are used more than once; this can also help in reducing the guessing factor in taking tests. It is important to notice in the matching test above that the items are homogeneous; they pertain to famous statesmen in American History. The column to the left consists of names which can be examined quickly. If both columns contain lengthy phrases or sentences, pupils may experience much unnecessary difficulty in matching items correctly.

The teacher should avoid writing matching tests where unnecessary clues are given to pupils. Consider the following:

A. The year Jamestown was begun . . . . John Smith

B. A leader of the Jamestown Colony . . . . Massachusetts Bay

C. An important minister of Puritan New England. . . . . James Ogelthorpe

. . . . 1607

D. The name of the first Puritan Colony in New England. . . . . Cotton Mather

It is quite obvious that "1607" would be matched with "The year Jamestown was begun" since no other date is given in the second column. Pupils generally would need no background knowledge or previous learnings to

make the correct response in this situation. The clue for the correct answer to "The name of the first Puritan Colony in New England" is also given in the second column.

Another kind of error that should be omitted when writing matching tests is illustrated with the following example:

A. Brazil . . . . produces much coffee.

B. Chile . . . . is known for copper production.

C. Argentina . . . . raises cattle in large numbers.

D. Peru . . . . was the location of the ancient Incas.

Pupils may notice patterns when responding to certain kinds of tests. In the above example, the correct responses when matching each of the two columns would be located horizontally such as "Brazil- produces much coffee," "Chile- is known for copper production," "Argentina- raises cattle in large numbers," and "Peru- was the location of the ancient Incas."

The teacher should evaluate as to the number of items on a matching test that should be written for a given class of pupils. Generally, most first grade pupils will lack an adequate reading vocabulary to take a matching test. There are exceptions to this statement. Some pupils in the first grade develop an excellent reading vocabulary for their stage and level of development. Intermediate grade pupils, of course, generally have developed a reading vocabulary which permits them to respond to a rather large number of items on a matching test. Perhaps, no more than ten response alternatives should be written for any matching test; otherwise, pupils may spend an excess amount of time looking for answers. In addition to considering reading levels of pupils when writing a matching

test for elementary school pupils, the following would be important considerations:

1. The attention span of pupils
2. Pupil purpose in taking the test
3. Important content in the test

No doubt, these considerations are important in any type of teacher-made test that is written.

Problems for Consideration and Discussion

1. Select two or three standardized achievement tests. Do you think the test items pertaining to social studies evaluate pupil achievement in critical thinking and problem solving? Justify your answer by giving specific examples.
2. In studying the manual for each of the standardized achievement tests you selected, how was the validity and reliability determined?
3. Write a teacher-made test containing essay, true-false, multiple-choice, and completion items. Exchange your test with a classmate and evaluate it in terms of acceptable criteria or standards.
4. Discuss with several classroom teachers the kinds of evaluation techniques that are used in their classes to evaluate pupil achievement.
5. Compare the evaluation section of two curriculum guides. How do these guides differ, if any, on recommended procedures for evaluating pupil achievement?
6. Study the evaluation section of a resource unit. What techniques are listed to evaluate pupil achievement in the social studies?

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